



LESSON 2.1.0 | OVERVIEW

A development related to the spread of writing, was the appearance of several belief systems that embraced people of differing languages and cultural traditions, what we often call “world religions.” The great majority of people in that era practiced local religions, that is, systems that centered on local gods and goddesses, sacred places in nature, astrology, magic, and pronouncements of shamans—individuals who mediated between the natural and supernatural worlds. In large states and empires, religious life tended to be diverse, though rulers could seldom resist encouraging their subjects to think of them as individuals with supernatural powers or even as divine beings. With the exception of Islam, all major world religions emerge in this era. Why?



LESSON 2.1.1 | OPENING | EQ Notebook

PURPOSE

Each unit of the Crash Course World History (CCWH) course is guided by an Essential Question (EQ).

You're learning a ton of stuff in this and every other unit, and it can be hard to keep track of what's most important. It would be pretty easy to become obsessed with a detail that, although interesting and a great way to impress people at a party is relatively unimportant. This activity will help you stay focused!

You'll think about the unit's Essential Question, and then you'll respond to it in writing. By journaling these questions and responses, you'll see how much you've learned as you move through each section of the course.

ATTACHMENT

- Essential Questions Unit 2 Notebook Worksheet

DIRECTIONS

Think about this question: How does religion affect the development of society?

Use the EQ Notebook – Unit 2 – Worksheet to respond to this question as best as you can. Be prepared to talk about these ideas with your class.



UNIT 2 | EQ Notebook Worksheet

Answer the unit essential Lessons 2.1.1, then again in Lessons 2.1.7. In your answer, be sure to include ideas such as historical context and how themes through history change over time. Use specific examples to support your claims or ideas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION | How does religion affect the development of society?

LESSON 2.1.1	
LESSON 2.1.7	
HOW HAS YOUR THINKING CHANGED?	



LESSON 2.1.2 | ACTIVITY | Origin Stories — Big History Project

PURPOSE

These origin stories are important for a number of reasons: They're entertaining, instructive, and also useful, because they help us better understand the kinds of questions that origin stories answer and the motivations of humans in asking these types of questions. These readings will prepare students to study the religions of this era.

ATTACHMENTS

- Origin Stories Readings
- Origin Story Comparison Worksheet

PROCESS

As a class we'll read the "Modern Scientific" origin story and complete the information on the Origin Story Comparison Worksheet for this article. There are seven other origin stories in this unit: Chinese, Judeo-Christian, Iroquois, Mayan, Greek, Zulu, and Efik. You'll be broken up into groups of seven to each read one article and report back to the class.

As you read your origin story, discuss as a group how you will complete the column for their origin story on the Origin Story Comparison Worksheet. Complete in the appropriate column as they discuss the story. Once all the groups have finished, inform your fellow students on your origin story so they may capture the information on the other groups.



READING | Origin Story Readings — Modern Scientific: The Big Bang — Cynthia Stokes Brown

This version of modern science's origin story is condensed and interpreted from a great body of historical and scientific information.

In the beginning, as far as we know, there was nothing. Suddenly, from a single point, all the energy in the Universe burst forth. Since that moment 13.8 billion years ago, the Universe has been expanding — and cooling down as it gets bigger.

Gradually energy cooled enough to become matter. One electron could stay in orbit around one proton to become an atom of hydrogen. Great clouds of hydrogen swirled around space until gravity pulled some atoms so close together that they began to burn as stars. Stars swirled together in giant clusters called galaxies; now there are galaxies numbering in the billions.

After each star burned up all its matter, it died in a huge explosion. The explosion generated so much heat that some atoms fused and got more and more complex, forming many different elements, including gold and silver. One giant star, our mother star, exploded and scattered clouds of gas containing all the elements needed to form living beings. About 5 billion years ago gravity pulled these atoms into a new star, creating the Sun. The leftover pieces of matter stuck to each other and formed eight planets, which revolve around the sun.

The third planet out, Earth, became our home. It was the perfect size — not too big, not too small — and the perfect distance from the Sun, not too far or too close. A thin crust formed over Earth's hot interior, and the temperature was just right for water to form on parts of the surface. Gradually the chemicals in the water formed inside of membranes and got more complex until single-cell living organisms appeared,

able to maintain themselves and reproduce. For 3 billion years these one-celled creatures reproduced almost exactly, but not quite. They gradually changed in response to their environment.

LIFE BECOMES MORE COMPLEX

But they also changed their environment. They learned to burn energy from the Sun, and they released oxygen into the atmosphere. The oxygen formed an ozone layer around Earth that protected life from the Sun's rays.

Eventually cells stuck together to form creatures with many cells. Plants and animals came out of the sea onto land and became ever more complex and aware, until about 100,000 years human beings evolved from a shared ancestor with the species of apes. Humans could talk in symbols and sing, dance, draw, and cooperate more than the other animals could. Humans learned to write and to accumulate their learning so that it kept expanding. Humans increased in skills and in numbers until there were too many people and too few big animals in some places.

Then humans learned to grow their own food and herd their own animals. Some animals learned to cooperate with humans. This gave humans new sources of food and work energy, and they could live in larger and larger groups. These groups expanded into cities and empires, using more and more of the resources of Earth. Humans collaborated and learned collectively in more complex ways; they traveled, traded, and exchanged inventions, creating vast civilizations of astonishing beauty and complexity. ►



Humans were always looking for more energy for their use. About 200 years ago we learned to use the energy from coal — trees that grew more than 300,000 years ago, then were buried underground. Humans learned to burn oil — animal remains buried long ago under the sea. Using these fossil fuels, humans began to change their climate quickly, as the gases released from burning these fuels ascended into the Atmosphere.

Now humans are in a predicament — our population is increasing rapidly, fossil fuels are running out, we are pushing many plants and other animals into extinction, and we are changing the climate. What are we humans going to do next?

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



READING | Origin Story Readings — Mayan Origin Story — Cynthia Stokes Brown

This origin story was told by the Mayans, who lived in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico from around 250 CE to 900 CE. It's the beginning of a long, complex story called the Popol Vuh (literally the "council book"), first translated into alphabetic text from Mayan hieroglyphics in the 16th century.

Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, still sighs, and is empty under the sky. There is not yet one person, not one animal, bird, fish, or tree. There is only the sky alone; the face of earth is not clear, only the sea alone is pooled under all the sky. Whatever might be is simply not there.

There were makers in the sea, together called the Plumed Serpent. There were makers in the sky, together called the Heart of Sky. Together these makers planned the dawn of life. The earth arose because of them. It was simply their word that brought it forth. It arose suddenly, like a cloud unfolding. Then the mountains were separated from the water. All at once great mountains came forth. The sky was set apart, and the earth was set apart in the midst of the waters.

Then the makers in the sky planned the animals of the mountains — the deer, pumas, jaguars, rattlesnakes, and guardians of the bushes. Then they established the nests of the birds, great and small. "You precious birds; your nests are in the trees and bushes." Then the deer and birds were told to talk to praise their makers, to pray to them. But the birds and animals did not talk; they just squawked and howled. So they had to accept that their flesh would be eaten by others.

The makers tried again to form a giver of respect, a creature who would nurture and provide. They made a body from mud, but it didn't look good. It talked at first but then crumbled and disintegrated into the water. Then the Heart of Sky called on the wise ones, the diviners, the Grandfather Xpiyacoc

and the Grandmother Xmucane, to help decide how to form a person. The Grandparents said it is well to make wooden carvings, human in looks and speech. So wooden humans came into being; they talked and multiplied, but there was nothing in their minds and hearts, no memory of their builder, no memory of the Heart of Sky.

Then there came a great destruction. The wooden carvings were killed when the Heart of Sky devised a flood for them. It rained all day and all night. The animals came into the homes of the wooden carvings and ate them. The people were overthrown. The monkeys in the forest are a sign of this. They look like the previous people — mere wooden carvings.

[The story continues with the final people being made from corn, an important crop that enabled the Mayans to move from being a hunting-and-gathering society to a more complex civilization.]

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



READING | Origin Story Readings – Zulu Origin Story — David Baker

The Zulu are a proud African people, famous throughout history for their fierceness and bravery in fending off invaders. Archaeologists tell us they traveled to the lush green lands of southeastern Africa many centuries ago from the huge lake regions to the north. Their creation story has many versions, passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. It tells of how the ancestors of all plants, animals, and humanity began from a single source.

At first, there was nothing but darkness. Earth was a lifeless rock. But in that darkness dwelt a god, Umvelinqangi, whose voice was like thunder and who, when angered, would shake the world with earthquakes. Umvelinqangi created a single tiny seed. He sent it to the Earth. This seed was the very first life, from which all other life descended. It landed in the soil and sprouted into a long reed. The reed dropped more seeds, which fell off and grew into even more reeds.

This continued until they covered a massive swamp to the north, the land called Uthlanga. At the end of one reed, there grew a man. His name was Unkulunkulu, known as “the first ancestor” and “the Great One.” Very small at first, he grew so large and heavy that he snapped off the end of the reed. Walking across the land of Uthlanga, he noticed men and women were sprouting at the ends of the other reeds. He picked them from the reeds. These people were the first humans, the ancestors of all nations, and they spread across the Earth. It was from Uthlanga that the ancestors of the Zulu journeyed south to the fertile lands they inhabit today.

The Great One continued to walk among the reeds. He saw many forms of life growing at the end of them. He gathered the fish and flung them into the rivers. Fields and forests began to grow, so he harvested birds and antelope, and they darted off into the wild. He picked cattle so they could be used by humans. He plucked off a ball of fire and a round

glowing stone, and flung them into the sky. These were the Sun and Moon. Light came into the world.

The Great One also plucked from the reeds fierce lions and other beasts that would travel the lands hunting prey. He harvested magical creatures, some good and some bad. One was the snake-like goddess of the rivers, Mamlambo, rumored by some Zulu to drown people, eat their faces, and suck out their brains.

Another goddess was Mbaba Mwana Waresa, a beautiful woman who created rain and rainbows, and who invented farming and gave the Zulu the gift of beer. One of the final acts of the Great One was the most tragic. He plucked the first chameleon off a reed and sent it to give humans the following message: “Men must not die.” By the words of the Great One, humans would become immortal. Unfortunately, the chameleon was slow and lazy in his journey. The Great One grew impatient and picked a different lizard from a reed.

This lizard was fast and quickly arrived to give word to the humans. But the lizard did not bear the same instructions. Instead the lizard uttered the words, “Men must die.” And so from that day, humans became mortal. It is said that chameleons change color because they are so ashamed their ancestor was not fast enough to spare humankind the invention of death.



The Great One was so powerful in all he created, many Zulu suspect he was the god who sent the seed to Earth in the first place and that he used it to transform himself into flesh and blood. But Zulu histories have differing versions of the story. The one thing of which the Zulu are certain is that all life—including humanity — has a single common ancestor.

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



READING | Origin Story Readings — Chinese Origin Story: Pangu and the Egg of the World — Cynthia Stokes Brown

This origin story comes from Chinese culture. It was first written down about 1,760 years ago, roughly 220-265 CE, yet it must have been told orally long before that

In the beginning was a huge egg containing chaos, a mixture of yin and yang — female-male, aggressive-passive, cold-hot, dark-light, and wet-dry. Within this yin and yang was Pangu, who broke forth from the egg as the giant who separated chaos into the many opposites, including Earth and sky.

Pangu stood in the middle, his head touching the sky, his feet planted on Earth. The heavens and the Earth began to grow at a rate of 10 feet a day, and Pangu grew along with them. After another 18,000 years the sky was higher and Earth was thicker. Pangu stood between them like a pillar 30,000 miles in height, so they would never again join.

When Pangu died, his skull became the top of the sky, his breath became the wind and clouds, his voice the rolling thunder. One eye became the Sun and the other the Moon. His body and limbs turned into five big mountains, and his blood formed the roaring water. His veins became roads and his muscles turned to fertile land. The innumerable stars in the sky came from his hair and beard, and flowers and trees from his skin. His marrow turned to jade and pearls. His sweat flowed like the good rain and the sweet dew that nurtures all things on Earth. Some people say that the fleas and the lice on his body became the ancestors of humanity.

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



READING | Origin Story Readings — Greek Origin Story: The Titans and The Gods of Olympus — Cynthia Stokes Brown

We know the Greek origin story from some of the earliest Greek literary sources that have survived, *The Theogony* and *Works and Days*, by Hesiod. This oral poet is thought to have been active sometime between 750 and 650 BCE, within decades of when the Homeric epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, took the form in which we know them.

Archaeological findings support the creation story recorded in Hesiod's work; pottery from the eighth century BCE depicts the gods and goddesses he describes. Before Hesiod told this patriarchal version, in which the first woman is the cause of much trouble, Pandora, whose name means "gift giver," was known in oral tradition as a beneficent Earth goddess.

In the beginning there was Chaos, a yawning nothingness. Out of the void emerged Gaia (the Earth) and other divine beings — Eros (love), the Abyss (part of the underworld), and the Erebus (the unknowable place where death dwells). Without male assistance, Gaia gave birth to Uranus (the sky), who then fertilized her.

From that union the first Titans were born — six males: Coeus, Crius, Cronus, Hyperion, Iapetus, and Oceanus, and six females: Mnemosyne, Phoebe, Rhea, Theia, Themis, and Tethys. After Cronus (time) was born, Gaia and Uranus decreed no more Titans were to be born. Cronus castrated his father and threw the severed genitals into the sea, from which arose Aphrodite, goddess of love, beauty and sexuality. Cronus became the ruler of the gods with his sister-wife, Rhea, as his consort. The other Titans became his court. Because Cronus had betrayed his father, he feared that his offspring would do the same. So each time Rhea gave birth, Cronus snatched up the child and ate it. Rhea hated this and tricked him by hiding one child, Zeus, and wrapping a stone in a baby's blanket so that Cronus ate the stone instead of the baby.

When Zeus was grown, he fed his father a drugged drink, which caused Cronus to vomit, throwing up Rhea's other children and the stone. Zeus then challenged Cronus to war for the kingship of the gods. At last Zeus and his siblings, the Olympians, were victorious, and the Titans were hurled down to imprisonment in the Abyss.

Zeus was plagued by the same concern as his father had been and, after a prophecy that his first wife, Metis, would give birth to a god greater than he, he swallowed Metis. But she was already pregnant with Athena, and they both made him miserable until Athena, the goddess of wisdom, civilization and justice, burst from his head — fully grown and dressed for war. Zeus was able to fight off all challenges to his power and to remain the ruler of Mount Olympus, the home of the gods.

One son of the Titans, Prometheus, did not fight with fellow Titans against Zeus and was spared imprisonment; he was given the task of creating man. Prometheus shaped man out of mud, and Athena breathed life into the clay figure. Prometheus made man stand upright as the gods did and gave him fire. Prometheus tricked Zeus, and to punish him, ►



Zeus created Pandora, the first woman, of stunning beauty, wealth, and a deceptive heart and lying tongue. He also gave Pandora a box she was commanded never to open, but eventually her curiosity got the best of her, and she opened the box to release all kinds of evil, plagues, sorrows, and misfortunes, and also hope, which lay at the bottom of the box.

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



READING | Origin Story Readings — Judeo-Christian Origin Story: Genesis — Cynthia Stokes Brown

This biblical story comes from Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, which is the sacred source book of both Judaism and Christianity. In Genesis, this story is followed immediately by a second creation story in Chapter 2, in which humans are created first, followed by plants and animals. These stories were written down in the first millennium BCE and evolved into the form in which we know them around 450 BCE, about 2,460 years ago.

GENESIS: CHAPTER 1

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the Earth, the Earth was a formless void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the dome and separated the water under the dome from the water above it. And it was so. God called the dome "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, of every kind." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed of every kind and trees bearing fruit with seed in it of every kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light on the earth."

And it was so. God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light on the Earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the Earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing of every kind that moves in the teeming water, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the Earth." And there was evening, and there was morning — the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures of every kind: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each of every kind." And it was so. God ►



made the wild animals of every kind, the livestock of every kind, and all the creatures that move along the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day. Thus the heaven and the Earth were finished, with all their multitudes. And on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.



READING | Origin Story Readings – Iroquois Origin Story: The Great Turtle — Cynthia Stokes Brown

This story comes from the Iroquois people in North America. In the 1400s they formed a federation of five separate tribes in what is now New York state. The Iroquois did not use writing, so they told this story orally until settlers from Europe wrote it down.

The first people lived beyond the sky because there was no Earth beneath. The chief's daughter became ill, and no cure could be found. A wise old man told them to dig up a tree and lay the girl beside the hole. People began to dig, but as they did the tree fell right through the hole, dragging the girl with it.

Below lay an endless sheet of water where two swans floated. As the swans looked up, they saw the sky break and a strange tree fall down into the water. Then they saw the girl fall after it. They swam to her and supported her, because she was too beautiful to allow her to drown. Then they swam to the Great Turtle, master of all the animals, who at once called a council.

When all the animals had arrived, the Great Turtle told them that the appearance of a woman from the sky was a sign of good fortune. Since the tree had Earth on its roots, he asked them to find where it had sunk and bring up some

of the earth to put on his back, to make an island for the woman to live on.

The swans led the animals to the place where the tree had fallen. First otter, then muskrat, and then beaver dived.

As each one came up from the great depths, he rolled over exhausted and died. Many other animals tried, but they experienced the same fate. At last the old lady toad volunteered. She was under so long that the others thought she had been lost. But at last she came to the surface and before dying managed to spit out a mouthful of dirt on the back of the Great Turtle.

It was magical earth and had the power of growth. As soon as it was as big as an island, the woman was set down on it.

The two white swans circled it, while it continued to grow until, at last, it became the world island as it is today, supported in the great waters on the back of the Great Turtle.

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



READING | Origin Story Readings – Efik Origin Story: Abassi, God of the Universe — David Baker

The Efik people live in southern Nigeria, for many centuries dwelling near the regions around the Cross River. They traditionally worshipped the god Abassi as a supreme creator. Their belief system was very relaxed. They had no formal priesthood or organized religious institutions. Worship and ritual were carried out on an individual or family level. Their creation story is a tale of humans defying the gods in order to achieve greater power and wisdom.

Before Abassi there was nothing. Abassi was god of the Universe, and giver of life, death, and justice. He was so powerful that he could create life, heal the sick, and even raise the dead. Some say that Abassi was the Sun, and they worshipped it as it rose and set every day. Abassi lived in the sky with his wife, Atai. She was a wise goddess, who often gave Abassi good advice.

Abassi created the stars, the Earth, and all the wildlife upon it. He also created two humans, a man and a woman. These humans lived with Abassi and Atai in the sky. They were very innocent and had little knowledge. Abassi and Atai looked after them, protected them, and even fed them, because they did not know how to feed themselves. One day, the humans were looking down from the sky at the Earth. They decided they wanted to live there. But when they asked Abassi if they could leave the sky and live on the Earth, he forbade it. The Earth was a place with many secrets where many things could be learned. Abassi feared that the humans would one day match his wisdom, or even surpass it.

Atai proposed a compromise. The humans could go live on Earth, but they had to return to the sky every day to have their meals. The humans were forbidden to learn to hunt

or farm. They were also forbidden to marry and have children, because a large nation of people might one day challenge the power of Abassi.

For a while, this plan worked. The humans returned to the sky every day to take their meals. However, one day, the woman decided she was sick of being fed like a helpless child. She went out into the fields and began to farm. When the time came for dinner, she defiantly refused to return to the sky with the man.

The next day, the man visited the woman in the fields and saw she was growing her own food. He decided to help her. Before long, the man and woman fell in love. They did not return to the sky again. Many years went by and they had many children. When those children were old enough, they joined their parents working in the field. They all continued to learn the secrets of the Earth and teach them to each other. The humans tried to hide their children from the sight of Abassi, but the god saw them. He grew very angry. He blamed his wife, Atai, because she had convinced him to let the humans live on Earth. Abassi feared that one day, the humans would have learned so much that they would surpass his wisdom. He also feared they would grow so numerous that they would surpass his power.



But Atai had a plan. In order to prevent the humans from growing too powerful, she sent evil into the world in the form of death and discord. The evil was so strong that the man and woman immediately died. Their children have suffered the ills of the world and argued among themselves ever since. But because their mother defied the gods, the humans have continued to learn the secrets of the Earth.

Source:

Big History Project. "Unit 1 - What is Big History? Origin Stories."

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.



NAME _____

COURSE _____

TIME _____

WORKSHEET | Origin Stories – Big History Project

Use this chart to highlight the differences - and any similarities - between the origin stories you read.

	MODERN SCIENTIFIC	MAYAN	ZULU	CHINESE	GREEK	JUDEO-CHRISTIAN	IROQUOIS	EFIK
SOURCE OF THE WORLD								
ORIGINATOR OF THE WORLD								
HOW THE EARTH FORMED								
AGE OF THE EARTH								
FIRST LIFE FORMS								
HOW HUMANS FORMED								
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND PLANTS/ANIMALS								



LESSON 2.1.3 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #6 Buddha and Ashoka

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #6, you will learn why Indian history is somewhat difficult to wrap into one short video. You will also explore some of the main religious beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism and how these faiths tie into the political and social structure of Indian history. India's history is hard to cover in 11.5 minutes and John Green explains why in this Crash Course video, which explains the big moments in early Indian history from the Vedas to Buddhism's migration into China.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #6 – Buddha and Ashoka](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which John relates a condensed history of India, post-Indus Valley Civilization. John explores Hinduism and the origins of Buddhism. He also gets into the reign of Ashoka, the Buddhist emperor who, in spite of Buddhism's structural disapproval of violence, managed to win a bunch of battles.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider how faith plays a role in a place's political and social structure.



LESSON 2.1.3 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Why is the history of India so complex?
2. Who took control of India after the disappearance of the Indus Valley Civilization in 1750 BCE? How do we know about them?
3. What is the caste system? What is the divine explanation for this social system?
4. One of the main concepts of Hinduism is dharma – what is dharma?
5. What is samsara and how does it connect to dharma?



NAME _____

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6. What is the ultimate goal of samsara?

7. How and why did Buddhism begin?

8. What were the Buddha's main teachings?

9. Why was Buddhism so appealing to members of India's lower castes?

10. What was so great about Ashoka?

11. What eventually happened to Buddhism in India?



TIME _____

2. How do the teachings of Buddha compare to those of Christianity?



LESSON 2.1.4 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #7 2000 Years of Chinese History

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #7, you'll examine the long, vibrant history of China, what has allowed this culture to thrive for over 2000 years, and how this area became the first modern state.

Crash Course videos should be used as an introduction to new ideas and concepts, an instruction to core ideas of the unit, and should serve as a reinforcement of previously learned events.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #7 – 2000 Years of Chinese History](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which John introduces you to quite a lot of Chinese history by discussing the complicated relationship between the Confucian scholars who wrote Chinese history and the emperors (and empress) who made it. Included is a brief introduction to all the dynasties in Chinese history and an introduction to Confucius and the Confucian emphasis on filial piety, the role the mandate of heaven played in organizing China, and how China became the first modern state.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider who writes history and why it's important to know the sources for the history we know.



LESSON 2.1.4 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Why does John Green refer to China as the first modern state?
2. What is a dynasty?
3. How can a dynasty end?
4. What was the first real dynasty of China? When did the dynastic period end and why?
5. What was the Mandate of Heaven?



NAME _____

COURSE _____

TIME _____

6. What did the Qin dynasty accomplish?

7. How did Chinese historians portray the Han emperor Wen?

8. What is Confucianism?

9. Why did Confucius emphasize the study of history?



LESSON 2.1.4 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Have students answer the following question in order for them to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. Why is it important to analyze sources when studying history?



LESSON 2.1.5 | READ | The Three Belief Systems of China – World History For Us All

PURPOSE

This activity explores the three main traditional belief systems, that is, religions or philosophies of China: Confucianism, Taoism (Daoism), and Buddhism. It provides background on each of these systems, including how, when, where, and by whom they were developed and diffused throughout China. Using translations of primary sources, students will examine the major tenets of each belief system, their specific differences, and their importance in the historical development

of China. Students will understand the significance of belief systems in helping to establish a sense of belonging and building social cohesion, focusing on China in the premodern era. Students will also be encouraged to reflect on the impact that their own belief systems have on their lives.

ATTACHMENT

- The Three Belief Systems of China

PROCESS

Read the provided article on belief systems in China and be ready to discuss the themes of the reading in class.



READING | The Three Belief Systems of China – World History For Us All

CONFUCIANISM

Confucius was a sage, that is, a wise man. He was born in 551 BCE, during a period when China was divided into many small states, each with its own lord. This time is known as the “Warring States Period” because the different states were always fighting with each other. There were many attempts to overthrow the lords because they were often cruel to the people they ruled. It was a period of great chaos (disorder) and suffering among the people.

Like other people during this difficult and dangerous time, Confucius looked for ways to improve society and make it more peaceful. He believed that life would be better and safer if there was clear order, or harmony, in society. He also understood that rulers needed to govern more wisely to avoid or reduce bloodshed. Confucius believed that people should not use family connections to obtain government positions as many people did during that time. Instead, he thought that government officials should be well-educated, talented, honest, and fair. Confucius believed that government officials should live lives of virtue (be virtuous) so that the people they ruled would follow their example. Therefore, he developed a philosophy that established clear relationships between people in all aspects of their lives.

Relationships:

- Parents-Children. Parents should love and care for their children. Children should respect and obey their parents. The children’s respect and devotion for their parents is often called “filial piety.”
- Ruler-Subjects. A ruler should care for the people he governs. The people he rules (the subjects) should obey a ruler who takes care of them.

- Older brothers-Younger brothers. Older brothers should care for younger brothers. Younger brothers should respect and obey older brother.
- Husband-Wife. Married people should live in harmony. A wife should obey her husband.
- Friend-Friend. Friends should trust each other and treat each other well.

Do you notice a pattern? Those in power must take care of those who are weaker. Those who are weaker must respect and obey those who are in power. Those who are equal should treat each other equally. The primary and most important relationship is between parent and child. Children who understand their roles and duties to their parents will then be able to go into the world and understand their positions in society. It will be very difficult, however, for those who do not fulfill their primary duties (to their parents) to lead a successful life.

These relationships are based on traditional Chinese values, such as respect for elders (older people) and ancestor worship, which existed before the time of Confucius. This was an important reason why Chinese people were able to embrace the teachings of Confucius: they were already familiar with many of these ideas. The teachings of Confucius were rooted in things that the Chinese already believed in and practiced.

On the other hand, Confucianism also placed greater importance on learning, or scholarship. According to Confucianism, people can become government officials to help rule the land if they study hard, are just and fair, and can pass difficult exams. Under his philosophy, it is not



as important which family you are born into. It is much more important how smart and just you are. Therefore, Confucianism gives everyone the opportunity to become more powerful.

The main writings of Confucius are in the Analects, the sayings of Confucius. In addition to his own words, the ideas of Confucianism were developed by many other people who were the disciples of Confucius. These people accepted and spread his teachings. The most famous of these was Mencius. He was born almost 100 years after Confucius died. He tried to convince rulers in China that they should accept the teachings of Confucius.

In Confucianism, memorizing the sayings of Confucius was one of the most important rituals. That way, if someone spoke the first part of a saying of Confucius, the other people in the group (Confucians) would be able to complete it. If they could not, they would not be considered to be part of that group of “well-educated” people or “leaders.”

Some of the sayings of Confucius were about the five relationships, but many others were examples of the way people should behave in order to keep harmony in society. These sayings often talked about people who were superior (better than other people) or inferior (worse than other people).

Here are two examples of famous sayings of Confucius:

- “What is a superior person? One who acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his actions.”
- “Good government results when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far are attracted to it.”

Source:

Rothblatt, Joel. “Big Era Four: Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE - 500 CE. Belief Systems in China: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism 581 BCE-1368 CE.” *World History for Us All*. PDF file.

TAOISM (ALSO CALLED DAOISM)

We do not know if Laozi was a real person or not. The name in Chinese means “Old Philosopher” or “Old Master.” This name may actually have represented several different writers who contributed to the Daodejing, or The Way and Integrity Classic, which was the earliest set of teachings associated with Taoism. This person or persons lived during a period when China was divided into many small states, each with its own lord. This time is known as the “Warring States Period,” because the different states were always fighting, or warring, with each other and their lords. There were many attempts to overthrow the lords because they were often cruel to the people they ruled. It was a period of great chaos and suffering among the people.

Like other people during this difficult and dangerous time, Laozi looked for ways to improve society and help comfort people. According to legend, he wanted to leave the problems in China in order to live out the end of his life in peace and quiet in Central Asia (west of China). A border guard asked him to write down his teachings before leaving China, and so Laozi composed the Daodejing, which lays out the main ideas of what later became known as Taoism.

According to Taoism, people have problems because they do not understand the natural world they live in and how it behaves. Therefore, the basic goal of Taoism is for people to understand the Tao (the way) of nature and behave according to it. Those who follow the Tao achieve mental clarity, power, and “inner peace.”

It is difficult to describe the Tao in words. In fact, when we put things from nature into words, we remove ourselves from the experience of reality, according to Taoism. Therefore, Taoists (people who practice Taoism) say that instead of using words, the best way to experience nature is by observing it and being ►



in tune with it. For example, when we watch waves at the beach, we do not judge waves and say, “This one is right and beautiful” or “That one is wrong and ugly.” Nature is just what it is; it does not make mistakes. There is no “good” or “bad” in nature. These are ideas that people made up to describe how things affect them.

Therefore, it is easier to explain Taoism with the yin yang symbol. Many people (especially in Western countries) tend to separate ideas in nature into opposites like good and evil, black and white, or life and death. Taoists see nature as being whole (the complete outside circle of the yin yang symbol), and everything inside of it being connected and as part of the whole. The “yin” is represented by black, and also represents water, the moon, and Earth; also quiet, soft and feminine qualities. The “yang” is represented by white, and also represents fire, the Sun and heaven, as well as the dynamic, hard and masculine qualities. Nature is always moving and flowing, and the yin and yang work together. For example, black and white are only seen in relation to the other, part of each other, and flowing into each other.

The Taoist belief system was accepted in China in part because it reflected earlier philosophies and legends. For example, according to a very famous legend in China, one of the mythical founders of China faced a problem about how to deal with a huge dam that was leaking. Rather than trying to block it, he formed channels to “naturally” drain the water away, thus creating China’s landscape.

Aside from Laozi’s writings in the Daodejing, the philosophy of Taoism is based on the ideas of other people who accepted and spread the teachings of Taoism. The most famous of these was Zhuangzi (or Master Zhuang), who was born perhaps 100 years after Laozi died and who wrote Zhuangzi.

In Taoism, meditation and tuning into nature are the most important rituals. Taoists also memorize the main writings of Taoism, especially the Daodejing and Zhuangzi. That way, if someone begins speaking the first part of a saying from one of these books, the other people in the group (Taoists) are able to complete it. If they cannot, they are not considered to be part of that group of Taoists.

Examples of two famous Taoist sayings:

- “Who can make the muddy water clear?
Let it be still and it will gradually become clear.”
- “That which goes against the Tao will come
to an early end.”

Source:

Rothblatt, Joel. “Big Era Four: Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE - 500 CE. Belief Systems in China: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism 581 BCE-1368 CE.” World History for Us All. PDF file.

BUDDHISM

Siddhartha Gautama was born a prince in Northern India. According to legend, it was predicted at Siddhartha’s birth that he would become either a great ruler or a great teacher. His father, the king, wanted Siddhartha to succeed him as ruler. For this reason, his father tried to prevent him from seeing or experiencing anything sad, which might cause him to become religious and teach others. Therefore, Siddhartha enjoyed his early years in the palace in luxury without knowing about things such as old age, sickness, or death. Eventually, the young prince decided to go outside of the palace. There, for the first time, he saw an old person with wrinkled skin who had difficulty walking. Siddhartha understood that he himself would also become old. He also saw a sick person and a dead person. All this made Siddhartha feel



much suffering. During another trip, he saw a holy man who appeared to be happy and at peace. Siddhartha learned that this person had given up his home and everything he owned. The holy person was trying to find wisdom and peacefulness by living a pure and simple life.

From then on, Siddhartha searched for a way to end suffering and become happy. He decided to follow the path of a holy person. He gave up everything he owned. He left his wife and young child and a life of luxury in the palace. He traveled around India for years, but he still did not find a way to end suffering. Finally, he decided to sit under a tree and meditate (become quiet and relaxed and clear his mind of thoughts) until he became enlightened (understood the truth about the world and such things as why there is suffering and how to end it). After meditating for several hours, he became enlightened and became known as the “Buddha,” or the one who knows the truth.

In order to share the truths he found with others, the Buddha became a teacher. (Remember: this is one of the career paths predicted for him at birth and the one that his father did not want him to take.) There are two main beliefs of Buddhism, that is, the teachings of the Buddha and his followers.

One is the “Four Noble Truths,” which the Buddha discovered when he meditated beneath the tree. These truths are:

1. Life is full of suffering from birth to death.
2. People suffer because they desire (try to get) things that do not last, for example, money and possessions.
3. The way to end suffering is to stop desiring things.
4. The way to get rid of desire is to follow the “Eightfold Path.”

According to Buddhism, the “Eightfold Path” means to lead a good life. People who follow this path are freed from suffering and gain happiness. These steps are:

Right understanding. It is important to be certain that you understand the teachings of the Buddha correctly.

1. Right thought. Think thoughts that are pure and good.
2. Right speech. Speak words that are truthful and not harmful.
3. Right action. Treat people well, as you would like to be treated.
4. Right work. Do not harm others as you earn a living.
5. Right effort. Keep trying to become a better person; stop bad habits.
6. Right mindfulness. Be mindful (or aware) of what you are doing and what is going on around you; always think about how you live.
7. Right meditation. Meditate correctly each day to clear your mind of desires and be able to find peace and truth.

When and why did Buddhism arrive in China? Buddhism probably first entered China along the “silk roads,” that is, the system of trade routes that connected China to lands farther west as far as the Mediterranean sea and Europe. Trade on the silk roads goes back thousands of years. By about 100 BCE, Buddhist missionaries began traveling on the routes along with traders. Trade routes opened contact and communication between people and places. In addition to goods, people and ideas spread along the trade routes.

By 68 CE, a Chinese Han emperor asked some advisers to visit India to learn more about this “western religion,” that is, Indian religion. They returned to China with Buddhist monks. New religions and beliefs often become popular during difficult times when people are searching for answers to why there is suffering. When dynasties were



ending in China there was much unrest, and the Chinese tended to embrace Buddhism more. For example, at the end of the Han dynasty, Buddhism became more popular.

Source:

Rothblatt, Joel. "Big Era Four: Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE - 500 CE. Belief Systems in China: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism 581 BCE-1368 CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.



LESSON 2.1.6 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #11 Christianity from Judaism to Constantine

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #11, you will examine the Christian faith, beginning with Judaism, through the birth of Jesus of Nazareth in the Roman Empire and his comparisons to Emperor Augustus, to the spread of the faith following his death. We're examining this through the lense of history, not theology, so by no means are we discussing Jesus' divinity. We're instead using this time to examine what was happening in the world during this era and why were conditions right for the son of a Jewish carpenter to develop such a loyal following and become one of the most influential people on Earth.

Crash Course videos should be used as an introduction to new ideas and concepts, an instruction to core ideas of the unit, and should serve as a reinforcement of previously learned events.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #11 – Christianity from Judaism to Constantine](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which John Green teaches you the history of Christianity, from the beginnings of Judaism and the development of monotheism, right up to Paul and how Christianity stormed the Roman Empire in just a few hundred years. Along the way, John will cover Abram/Abraham, the Covenant, the Roman Occupation of Judea, and the birth, life, death and legacy of Jesus of Nazareth.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider why did a small group of people believe Jesus as the Messiah? Why and how did that belief become so widespread? And what conditions were present for Christianity to take off where other prophets of the time might have failed?



LESSON 2.1.6 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Who did the Hebrews initially worship and how did they show their faith?
2. What is monotheism?
3. Who are the “chosen people” and what’s the origin of this name?
4. What are some of the characteristics of the Hebrew god?
5. At the time that Jesus was born, some 2000 years ago, who controlled the region of Judea?



NAME _____

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TIME _____

6. Jesus' message of peace, love, and social justice was particularly resonant with what groups?
7. How was the message of Jesus and his followers received by the Romans?
8. Why would people of the era believe that Jesus was the Messiah?
9. What similarities do Jesus and Roman Emperor Augustus share?
10. What attribute of Paul (Saul of Tarsus) made it possible to spread the message of Christianity?
11. What other reasons might be responsible for the spread of Christianity during this era?



LESSON 2.1.7 | CLOSING | EQ Notebook

PURPOSE

At the start of the unit, you examined the essential question without much to go on. Now that the lesson is over, let's revisit the essential question. This time, cite specific passages and evidence from the content in the unit that provide insights into answering the essential question.

ATTACHMENT

- Essential Questions Unit 2 Notebook Worksheet

DIRECTIONS

Think about this question: How does religion affect the development of society?

Use the EQ Notebook – Unit 2 – Worksheet to respond to this question as best as you can. Be prepared to talk about these ideas with your class.

HOW DOES RELIGION AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY?

Now that students have spent some time with the material of this unit, they should look back over the content covered as well as any additional information they have come across, and write down any quotes or evidence that provide new insights into the essential question you've assigned for Unit 2. Once they've finished, they should think about how this new information has impacted their thinking about the driving question, and write down their thoughts in their EQ Notebook.



LESSON 2.2.0 | OVERVIEW

As the early states and empires grew in number, size, and population, they frequently competed for resources and came into conflict with one another. In quest of land, wealth, and security, some empires expanded dramatically. In doing so, they built powerful military machines and administrative institutions that were capable of organizing human activities over long distances, and they created new groups of military and political elites to manage their affairs. As these empires expanded their boundaries, they also faced the need to develop policies and procedures to govern their relationships with ethnically and culturally diverse populations: sometimes to integrate them within an imperial society and sometimes to exclude them. In some cases, these empires became victims of their own successes. By expanding their boundaries too far, they created political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that they could not manage. They also experienced environmental, social, and economic problems when they overexploited their lands and subjects and permitted excessive wealth to be concentrated in the hands of privileged classes.



LESSON 2.2.1 | OPENING | EQ Notebook

PURPOSE

Each unit of the Crash Course World History (CCWH) course is guided by an Essential Question (EQ).

You're learning a ton of stuff in this and every other unit, and it can be hard to keep track of what's most important. It would be pretty easy to become obsessed with a detail that, although interesting and a great way to impress people at a party is relatively unimportant. This activity will help you stay focused!

You'll think about the unit's Essential Question, and then you'll respond to it in writing. By journaling these questions and responses, you'll see how much you've learned as you move through each section of the course.

ATTACHMENT

- Essential Questions Unit 2 Notebook Worksheet

DIRECTIONS

Think about this question: Why do civilizations rise and fall? When they fall, what impact do they have on history?

Use the EQ Notebook – Unit 2 – Worksheet to respond to this question as best as you can. Be prepared to talk about these ideas with your class.



UNIT 2 | EQ Notebook Worksheet

Answer the unit essential Lessons 2.2.1, then again in Lessons 2.2.8. In your answer, be sure to include ideas such as historical context and how themes through history change over time. Use specific examples to support your claims or ideas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION | Why do civilizations rise and fall?

When they fall, what impact do they have on history?

LESSON 2.2.1	
LESSON 2.2.8	
HOW HAS YOUR THINKING CHANGED?	



LESSON 2.2.2 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #5 The Persians & Greeks

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #5, students examine the value of comparative history and how the contributions of the Persians and the Ancient Greeks have influenced our own history as well as how we have come to learn history. Students will learn about Persian rule, why their leader was considered “King of Kings” and why if you had to live in the 5th century BCE, the Persian Empire was pretty nice place to live. Additionally, through the outsider perspective of Herodotus, who was Greek, students will discover historical bias. On the Greek side of things, their culture and approach to society is a legacy that can still be seen today. However, most of the Greek city-states believed in slavery and citizenship was limited to males. Finally, students examine if the “right” side

(the Greeks) won the Persian Wars, which established the western tradition of democracy and cultural flourishing that gave us the Classical age.

Crash Course videos should be used as an introduction to new ideas and concepts, an instruction to core ideas of the unit, and should serve as a reinforcement of previously learned events.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #5 – The Persians & Greeks](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which John compares and contrasts Greek civilization and the Persian Empire. Of course we’re glad that Greek civilization spawned modern western civilization, right? Maybe not. From Socrates and Plato to Darius and Xerxes, John explains two of the great powers of the ancient world, all **without** the use of footage from 300.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider who are the writers of history and how do we know their perspectives are valid? Additionally, what might have happened had the Greeks not defeated the Persians in the Persian Wars?



LESSON 2.2.2 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Who were Cyrus the Great and Darius I and what did they do for the Persian Empire?
2. Why was the Persian ruler known as the King of Kings?
3. What is Zoroastrianism? Why don't we hear more about their practices than Christian ones?
4. What were some of the major accomplishments of the Ancient Greeks?
5. Why does Aristophanes get both a good and bad rap these days?



COURSE _____

10. What are the pros and cons of the Greeks (particularly Athens) winning the Persian Wars?



LESSON 2.2.2 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Answer the following questions to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. Why might it be problematic for people trying to learn about Persian history to have a Greek historian as our main source of evidence?

2. How do the teachings of Buddha compare to those of Christianity?



LESSON 2.2.3 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #8 Alexander the Great

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #8, you are introduced to the life and times of Alexander the Great, from his conquests to his legacy while also discussing the issue of deeming someone from history to be “great.” He defeated the Persian Empire, something both the Spartans and the Athenians had failed at accomplishing. Through his conquests, Alexander spread Greek ideas, culture, language and architecture as far east as the Indus Valley. Along with him came empire builders: scientists, doctors, artisans, and philosophers. However, Alexander’s strengths were tied more to his military mind than empire building. So, was he great?

Crash Course videos should be used as an introduction to new ideas and concepts, an instruction to core ideas of the unit, and should serve as a reinforcement of previously learned events.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #8 – Alexander the Great](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which you are introduced to the life and accomplishments of Alexander the Great, his empire, his horse Bucephalus, the empires that came after him, and the idea of Greatness. Is greatness a question of accomplishment, of impact, or are people great because the rest of us decide they’re great?

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider how we view people and their legacy following their deaths. Perhaps Alexander’s greatest feat was his hero-like status in the decades and centuries that followed his death. What examples from present times can students reference that might be similar?



LESSON 2.2.3 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Why is it problematic to refer to certain rulers as “the Great”?
2. Who was Alexander the Great?
3. Why does John Green say that it’s difficult to judge someone’s greatness based on his or her accomplishments?
4. What is the first reason for Alexander’s “greatness”?
5. What wasn’t Alexander very good at and what became of his empire?



6. What was Alexander's second greatness, according to John Green?

7. What was Alexander's third greatness?

8. How do Napoleon and Pompey help Alexander's greatness?

9. Why is the study of greatness troubling?

LESSON 2.2.3 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Answer the following question to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. Why is it important to analyze sources when studying history?



LESSON 2.2.4 | READ | An Age of Greek and Persian Power

PURPOSE

This reading explores the founding and expansion of Greek civilization, but also several other important developments that occurred about the same time. Yes, the 400 years from 600 to 200 BCE included the flourishing of the Greek civilization and the Golden Age of Athens. Those developments, however, took place on a much larger stage than what is now Greece. A succession of empires greatly contributed to the Mediterranean region's integration and expansion, especially through the conquests

of Alexander the Great, which contributed to the spread of Greek ideas and customs far east of the Aegean Sea. Students will read about the empires outside of Greece and will examine how trade was a major force in the integration of ideas and culture. As the number of cities, so too did the demand for goods, which expanded land and sea trade routes.

ATTACHMENT

- An Age of Greek and Persian Power Article

PROCESS

Read the provided article and be ready to discuss major themes and topics following your completion of the reading.



READING | An Age of Greek and Persian Power: The Persian (Achaemenid) Empire, 550–330 BCE

BACKGROUND

The Persians, a group of Indo-European speaking tribes from Inner Eurasia, arrived on the Iranian plateau sometime between 1500 and 1000 BCE. About 550 BCE, Cyrus II, the leader of the Achaemenids, which was one of these Persian clans, successfully revolted against the Medes, the Persians' overlords, who controlled upper Mesopotamia.

FORMATION

It took Cyrus less than a decade to conquer the Medes. He then moved on to seize control of the Anatolian Peninsula and the Greek city-states nestled along the peninsula's western edge. Syria was next and in 539 Babylon fell as well.

When conquering Babylon, Cyrus had promised to treat it fairly and not to destroy either its institutions or its culture. At the same time, he returned to various groups the goods which the Babylonians had taken from them as a sign of conquest. Cyrus also freed the Hebrews, who had been enslaved in Babylon. He allowed them to return home. Later he helped them rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. This policy of local cultural independence won for him a reputation as a fair ruler.

Meanwhile, other Persian forces moved northeast into the rich lands of Bactria-Sogdiana where they captured most of the trade centers on the Silk Routes that led to Inner Eurasia. After Cyrus' death, his son, Cambyses, added Egypt to the empire's holdings. In 322 BCE, Cambyses died. Darius (522–486 BCE), a strong military leader, seized control. He soon pushed the Persian borders to the Indus River valley in the east. The Persians now controlled the largest empire the world had ever seen.

ADMINISTRATION

The vast Persian Empire was the most culturally diverse empire that had ever existed. It linked the east with the west and ruled cities where people of every class and culture rubbed shoulders and ideas. It was a huge crucible of cultural and social cross-fertilization. To rule it, the Persians had to invent new administrative tools.

It was Darius I who, building on the administrative systems inherited from the Assyrians and Babylonians, reorganized the empire. He established twenty provinces (called satrapies), each with its governor, military commander, and treasurer, who reported separately to the king. In addition, there was a separate system of inspectors known as the King's Eyes or the King's Ears. These inspectors had their own armies and could move against even a military commander if necessary. The system was so effective in preventing rebellion, corruption, and harsh rule that it was copied again and again, even in modern times.

Darius also introduced the Babylonian calendar, known for its accuracy, and set up granaries to assure a constant supply of food for his troops. He built elaborate underground irrigation systems as well. In the far reaches of what is now Iran, these irrigation systems turned deserts into gardens.

RELIGION

The Persian ruling class followed the religion of Zoroastrianism. This religion taught that there were two deities, Ahura Mazda, the god of light and truth and Ahriman, the god of darkness and evil. These two gods were in constant struggle, a struggle that Ahura Mazda would eventually win. Zoroastrians believed that after the final battle, there would



be a Judgment Day and everyone who had ever lived would be judged and sent either to heaven or hell. These ideas are believed to have influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Today, there are Zoroastrian communities in Iran and India, where they are called Parsis or Parsees. Communities also exist in other parts of the world including the United States. The Achaemenids did not force Zoroastrianism on their subjects. As rulers of an empire that embraced more cultural communities than had any other before them, they wisely allowed their subjects much cultural freedom.

Persian kings saw themselves as ruling by the will of the god Ahura Mazda who cared for the well-being of all. In an inscription on a rock in Behistun, written in 519 BCE, Darius proclaims that “by the favor of Ahura Mazda I am King; Ahura Mazda bestowed the kingdom upon me.”

TRADE

Darius encouraged trade and economic development in a number of ways. He standardized weights and measures and established a coinage system based on gold and silver. He also built banking houses. (The word “check” is derived from a Persian word.)

When Darius came to power, a network of roads connecting the urban centers in Southwest Asia already existed. Darius added a royal road from Susa in the Persian homeland to Sardis in the western part of Anatolia, a distance of some 1500 miles. A system of relay stations made it possible for a rider carrying mail to ride the distance in six to nine days rather than the usual three months. Officials and merchants traveling on the imperial roads to do the emperor’s business carried passports entitling them to free food and lodging along the way. Perhaps Darius’ most ambitious undertaking was the building of a canal, 140 km long and 50 meters

wide, from the Nile to the Red Sea. Completed in 500 BCE, it connected Memphis, then the capital of Egypt, to Babylon by sea.

DECLINE/FALL

During Darius’ reign, the Greek city-states at the western edge of the Anatolian Peninsula rebelled. They were encouraged by Athens. Darius successfully squashed the rebellion, and two years later he sent an expedition to discipline Athens and the other unruly Greek city states. The Persian army was defeated at the battle of Marathon in 490 BCE. Darius died before he could launch another attack; but his son Xerxes advanced on Greece with a huge expeditionary force. Xerxes managed to burn Athens. He was defeated, however, when the Athenian general Themistocles lured the Persian fleet into a trap at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BCE. After this humiliation, the Persians chose to deal with the Greeks through diplomacy, siding with one, then another of Athens’ enemies.

The next 150 years of Persian history saw slow decline under a series of ineffectual rulers. Rebellions multiplied. By 359 BCE, Phillip II of Macedonia had seen the empire’s weakness and planned an invasion. He was murdered before he could launch the plan, but his son Alexander carried it forward. In 330, Alexander earned his title “the Great” with the defeat of Darius III the last emperor of the Achaemenid dynasty.

Source:

Eppley, Felicia. “Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE – 500 CE. An Age of Greek and Persian Power 600 – 200 BCE.” World History For Us All. PDF File.



READING | An Age of Greek and Persian Power: The Athenian Empire, 454–404 BCE

BACKGROUND

Greece was a collection of city-states sprinkled across the tip of the Balkan Peninsula, on islands of the Aegean Sea, along the western edge of the Anatolian Peninsula (Ionia), and on the rim of the Black Sea. In the sixth century BCE, the Ionian city-states belonged to Persia, which conquered them along with the rest of the Anatolian Peninsula. In 494 BCE, however, these city-states revolted, spurred on by Athens. Darius, the Persian emperor quickly squashed the uprising, and two years later, sent an army to get even with Athens. In spite of having a force several times larger as the Athenian army, the Persians suffered defeat on the plains of Marathon in 490 BCE.

Darius died before he could have another go at the Athenians. But in 480 BCE his son Xerxes launched a second attack. The Athenian navy, however, outfoxed and outmaneuvered the Persian fleet at the Battle of Salamis. Xerxes watched the defeat of his navy from his throne high up on the coastal plain overlooking the battle site. He quickly marched home in humiliation. The following year, the Greeks defeated the remnants of the Persian army at Platea.

FOUNDING

Although the Persians had been defeated, they remained a threat to the Greeks. In 478, 104 Greek city-states created an alliance, the Delian League, under Athenian leadership, agreeing to contribute ships or cash to Athens in exchange for building and maintaining a navy. Although the League was run by a council of representatives from member states, the Athenians, as the leading city-state, determined how much each state would be taxed—how many ships it would contribute or how much money it would pay. Members could

not leave the League without unanimous consent of the members, which meant that Athens could prevent any city-state from dropping out.

Xerxes died in 456 BCE and with him the threat from Persia. Nevertheless, Pericles (495-429), the powerful, charismatic leader of Athens, refused to allow any state to leave the League. In fact, he forced more city-states to join. States that did not cooperate were subject to occupation by Athenian troops. In 454 BCE, the League's treasury was moved to Athens. The Delian League had become the Athenian empire. At its imperial height in the 440s BCE, Athens controlled 172 tribute-paying city-states.

ADMINISTRATION

Athens, the champion of individualism and the independent city-state, had become the oppressor. While probably no Athenian would have admitted to owning subject states, Athens certainly treated the states as though they were private property. Uncooperative states had their land seized and handed out to Athenian colonists. Governments in uncooperative states were overthrown and replaced. Taxes were collected regularly and often raised. With no external enemy threatening the empire, the funds piled up in the Athenian treasury.

Therefore, it was not long before these taxes from member states, whose citizens were mostly farmers, traders, and herders, were being used support projects in Athens. This money financed the art, architecture, and literature of what historians call the Golden Age of Athens. In 447 BCE, funds from the League's treasury paid for the construction of the Parthenon. Completed in 432, it was built on the Acropolis, ►



where the Persians had destroyed temples in 480 BCE.

Phidias (490-430), one of Greece's greatest sculptors, created the Parthenon's monumental statue of Athena. It was about thirty-nine feet high and made of gold and ivory. The figure of Athena held a spear in her left hand and a six-foot high statue of Nike, the goddess of Victory, in her right hand.

The arts, including drama, also flourished under the Athenian empire. Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, and Sophocles, four of Greece's most important playwrights, wrote during this period. So did the historians Herodotus (c. 490-c.425 BCE) and Thucydides (c. 460/455-c. 300 BCE).

Needless to say, subject city-states were not happy about underwriting the glory of Athens. They did, however, benefit to some extent from the arrangement, enjoying a period of relative peace and prosperity.

RELIGION

All of the city-states of the Athenian empire shared generally the same culture, so religion was never an issue. By 500 BCE, however, the old polytheistic religion of Zeus, Hera, and Athena, had ceased to be used for much more than public ceremony. Into this spiritual void came mystery religions such as the Egyptian cult of the goddess Isis. These cults had elaborate rites and restricted memberships. At the same time, thinkers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle used reason to develop systems of rational thought, philosophies that spread widely in later centuries.

TRADE

The Athenian navy cleared the Aegean of pirates. This was a benefit to all of the merchants of the empire because it allowed for an increase in trade. The downside was that Athens closely controlled trade so as to benefit itself.

DECLINE/FALL

In the wars against Persia, Athens and Sparta had been allies. Now they turned against one another. The increase in Athenian wealth and power, both political and commercial, alarmed the Spartans and their allies. In 460 BCE, the First Peloponnesian War broke out. In 445 BCE a 30- year peace treaty was signed, but the peace didn't last. In 431, the fighting resumed. In 404, The Spartans won and imposed humiliating terms on Athens. All but a few of its ships had to be surrendered. Athenian democracy was replaced by a Council of Thirty, an oligarchy, loyal to Sparta. In addition, Athenian property was plundered and many citizens were exiled. The Athenian Empire had come to an end.

Source:

Eppley, Felicia. "Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE – 500 CE. An Age of Greek and Persian Power 600 – 200 BCE." World History For Us All. PDF File.



READING | An Age of Greek and Persian Power: Alexander's Empire, 330–323 BCE

BACKGROUND

Macedonia was a small woodland kingdom north of Greece. It was peopled by Greek-speaking warrior-aristocrats who ruled over farmers and herders. Athens and the other culturally sophisticated city-states to the south tended to regard Macedonians as uncivilized and their land as a source of timber, gold, and horses. In 358 BCE, Philip II became the Macedonian king. He had become familiar with Greek life, culture, and military tactics during the three years he spent as a hostage in Thebes. While he had no use for democracy, he admired Hellenic (Greek) ceremony and cultural refinement.

When he returned to Macedonia, Philip created a new kind of army, one with soldiers who served year-round. He trained his forces in Greek military tactics and armed them with thirteen foot spear-tipped pikes. Then he advanced on the Greek city-states, including Athens. He destroyed Thebes and Sparta, spared Athens, and declared himself supreme leader of a unified Greco-Macedonian (that is Greek and Macedonian) federation of states.

FOUNDING

Philip intended to attack Persian-ruled Anatolia next, but he was assassinated before he could take action. He was succeeded by his son, Alexander, barely twenty years old. Alexander had been educated by the Greek philosopher Aristotle and trained in politics and war by his father. He was tireless in battle, a stickler for details, and conscious of his image. He was adored by his soldiers and almost everyone else who met him.

In 334 BCE, Alexander attacked Persia at the head of an army of 35,000 Macedonians and Greek allies. In the course of the next eleven years, he moved through Anatolia, Syria, Egypt,

and Babylonia, conquering as he went. He faced the Persians in three major battles and won each against huge odds. He forced Emperor Darius III (336–300 BCE) to flee for his life. He then occupied the great Persian capitals, and moved into the empire's northeastern provinces, taking possession of stretches of the trans-Eurasian silk routes. In 326 BCE, he turned southeast and pushed his exhausted troops across the Hindu Kush Mountains into the Indus valley. There, he subdued one local ruler after another. When he asked his troops to go on beyond the Indus, they refused. He saw that they could be pushed no further and agreed to head home. In 330 BCE, Alexander was in possession of a gigantic Indo-Mediterranean empire.

ADMINISTRATION

Alexander was undoubtedly a conqueror and destroyer. For example, he demolished the Greek city of Thebes, and he allowed his soldiers to reduce the Persian capital of Persepolis to ruins, killing the men, enslaving the women, and carrying off the city's treasure. Alexander, however, was also a builder. He was enamored of Greek culture and an admirer of the Persian's skill at administering an empire. At the practical level, he kept Persian bureaucratic organization, sometimes substituting Macedonians in key positions. He extended the Persian system of satraps (provinces) to the lands he conquered in non-Persian areas south of the Hindu Kush.

Everywhere, he established new cities in the Greek style and filled them with ex-soldiers mostly Greek and Macedonian, who settled down and formed an elite class. Most of these Greeks married local women and reared half-Greek, half-Persian children who grew up speaking Greek. Alexander himself wed Roxana, the daughter of a prince of Sogdiana, ►



an ancient territory that generally corresponds to the modern nation of Uzbekistan. Alexander also held a gigantic marriage ceremony, wedding thousands of his soldiers to Persian women.

TRADE

Alexander traveled with a court that included scientists, doctors, architects, artisans, merchants, and surveyors. In the region between the Hindu Kush and the Indus, his surveyors laid out a road that facilitated trade in the area long after Alexander had left. Later, the Mauryan Emperors of India extended the route to the Ganges and beyond. The route is still used today.

RELIGION

Alexander's mother once told him that his real father was not Phillip but Apollo. At the time, the pronouncement did not appear to give Alexander divine ambitions. When he got to Egypt, in 331, however, he went to consult the oracle of Amon, the Creator God, in the Lybian Desert. There the priest told the king that he was the son of Amon-Zeus, a name combining the chief Egyptian and Greek gods. Shortly after, Alexander had himself recognized as the Pharaoh, whom Egyptians considered to be divine.

As his victories mounted and his legend grew, Alexander seemed to become more convinced of his divine roots. At one point, he required that his subjects prostrate themselves (lie face down) before him. His Greek court and soldiers refused to do this, so he dropped the issue. He did, however, promote his relationship to the gods by putting his own likeness on the front of coins and the image of Zeus wielding a thunderbolt on the back. During his lifetime, several religious cults devoted to his worship appear to have arisen, though they disappeared shortly after he died.

DECLINE/FALL

After Alexander took the Indus valley in 325 BCE, he looked southeastward toward the Ganges River. By this time, his army had been away from home for almost ten years. Even his toughest Macedonian warriors were exhausted. They refused to go further, and Alexander decided to turn for home. He got as far as Babylon, where in June 323 BCE he died. He appears to have died of a fever complicated by a number of factors: wounds he had suffered in the course of battles, overwork, a hunting trip in mosquito-ridden swamps, and a heavy night of drinking. He lingered for four days, and when his generals desperately urged him to name an heir, he is said to have replied that it would go to the strongest. In fact, after his death, his generals almost immediately set to warring against one another, resulting in the division of the empire into three major military states. Alexander asked to be buried in Egypt, and reportedly his body was taken there in a golden sarcophagus (coffin). But no one knows where the conqueror's remains were laid.

Source:

Eppley, Felicia. "Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE – 500 CE. An Age of Greek and Persian Power 600 – 200 BCE." World History For Us All. PDF File.



READING | An Age of Greek and Persian Power: The Ptolemaic Empire, 323–30 BCE

BACKGROUND

After conquering as far east as the Indus River valley, Alexander the Great returned to Babylon in today's Iraq, where he died in June 323 BCE. As he lay on his deathbed, his generals desperately urged him to name an heir. He is said to have replied that it would go to the strongest. In fact, after his death, his generals almost immediately set to warring against one another, resulting in the division of the empire into three major military states, the Seleucid empire centered on Iran and Iraq, the Antigonid monarchy centered on Macedonia and Greece, and the Ptolemaic kingdom centered on Egypt.

FOUNDING

After almost fifty years of civil wars, three of Alexander's former generals emerged victorious. One of the big winners was Ptolemy, who got Egypt, perhaps the richest prize. In addition he and his successors were able to grab the island of Cyprus and coastal lands of Anatolia and the Levant (today Syria, Lebanon, and Israel). During the 300 years of their reign, none of the Ptolemies spoke Egyptian except for Cleopatra VII, the last one, who died in 30 BCE.

ADMINISTRATION

The Ptolemies ran Egypt as though it were a private estate. Non-Egyptian soldiers (Greek, Macedonian, and Anatolian) were hired to fight the Ptolemaic wars and keep the Egyptian subjects in line. Greeks had been in Egypt as traders for several centuries. Now they became part of the exclusively Greek ruling class, which excluded even upper-class Egyptians.

The Ptolemies divided their kingdom into provinces, each of which was subdivided into areas and villages. Because the Ptolemies' chief concern was the extraction of wealth

from their kingdom, the financial minister became the most powerful administrator. Virtually everything taxable was taxed—houses, goods people bought, goods they sold, farmlands, vineyards, orchards, and gardens. Furthermore, licenses were required for fishing and trading as well as for keeping bees and pigs. (Part of a tax collector's job was to keep up the morale of his victims so that they would not simply abandon their land or jobs.) In addition, the government controlled trade, mines, quarries, salt production, and any commodity which produced oil—linseed, safflower, and castor. They also enforced strict controls on the production of linen, papyrus, and beer. At the same time, they expanded cultivatable land with irrigation and introduced new crops such as cotton and improved varieties of wine grapes.

Alexandria, on the Mediterranean, was the major Egyptian city and port. Founded by Alexander, it was the heart of the Ptolemaic administration. Its population was a cosmopolitan mix of Greeks, Macedonians, Jews, and native Egyptians. It was one of the intellectual centers of the Hellenistic, that is, Greek-like cultural world. It was here that Ptolemy I, who collected scrolls obsessively, founded the great museum and library. Eventually, the library had some 500,000 scrolls. The Ptolemies recruited the best minds of the day, creating the first "think tank". It was here where Aristarchus of Samothrace theorized that the sun was the center of the universe and where Eratosthenes of Cyrene used simple geometry to calculate, with amazing accuracy, the earth's circumference. It was at Alexandria that Ptolemy I began construction of the gigantic Pharos lighthouse, which became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. ►



TRADE

Trade expanded under the Ptolemies. Their foreign holdings along the edges of the Mediterranean enriched the empire with timber, metals, pitch, wine, and precious metals. In addition, they built roads from the Nile to new ports on the Red Sea. The new ports were designed to facilitate the importation of elephants, major military weapon in that era. These ports also handled spices from the Arabian Peninsula and India, spices that were crucial to religious sacrifice and mummification. Taking advantage of the seasonal winds (monsoons) which blew across the Arabian Sea, mariners and merchants built up trade lines between India and the Mediterranean world.

RELIGION

Although the Greeks brought their gods with them to Egypt, the Ptolemies carefully respected the traditional Egyptian gods. Ptolemy I became the Pharaoh, the god-king. He called himself Ptolemy I, Sotor, or Savior. After his death, his son Ptolemy II established a joint religious cult for his father and mother as savior gods. Cults were established for subsequent Ptolemaic rulers as well, sometimes even while they were alive. At death, the bodies of these Hellenistic pharaohs were mummified and buried in sarcophagi (coffins) covered with Egyptian hieroglyphs.

At the same time, those following other religions were not harassed. While the Ptolemies controlled Palestine, the Jews, for example, enjoyed a period of peace. Jews living in Alexandria were allowed to build a synagogue in that city, and, under Ptolemy II, they translated Jewish Scripture into Greek. (Many of the Jews in Alexandria spoke Greek rather than Hebrew.) Only under the vicious Ptolemy IV (221-203) were they persecuted.

DECLINE/FALL

By 200 BCE, the glory days of the Ptolemaic Dynasty were waning. When facing a struggle in 217 with the Seleucid king, Antiochus III, the Ptolemies found themselves in a financial bind. Without funds to hire mercenaries, they were forced to arm some 200,000 Egyptian troops. The cost of the war led to increasing money problems and peasant unrest. Between 207 and 186 BCE, Upper Egypt broke away and was governed by separate Pharaohs of Nubian origin. The Ptolemies' lack of concern for the population, widespread corruption, civil unrest, a disastrous foreign policy, and near economic collapse contributed to the decline of the empire. It had no resources to ward off the growing power of Rome to the west. It is not surprising that the Roman Emperor, Octavian, seized Egypt from Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, in 30 BCE.

Source:

Eppley, Felicia. "Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE – 500 CE. An Age of Greek and Persian Power 600 – 200 BCE." World History For Us All. PDF File.



LESSON 2.2.5 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #10 The Roman Empire. Or Republic. Or... Which Was it?

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #10, you will examine Rome's transition from city-state to kingdom to republic to empire and Julius Caesar's critical role in the transition. Traditionally, historians divide Ancient Roman history into three main periods but the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire are questionable and therefore debatable when discussing power shifts in Roman history. As was the case of Alexander the Great, empire building and military strength go hand-in-hand. Crash Course videos should be used as an introduction

to new ideas and concepts, an instruction to core ideas of the unit, and should serve as a reinforcement of previously learned events.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #10 – The Roman Empire. Or Republic. Or... Which Was it?](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which John Green explores exactly when Rome went from being the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire. Here's a hint: it had something to do with Julius Caesar, but maybe less than you think. Find out how Caesar came to rule the empire, what led to him getting stabbed 23 times on the floor of the senate, and what happened in the scramble for power after his assassination. John covers Rome's transition from city-state to dominant force in the Mediterranean in less than 12 minutes. Well, Rome's expansion took hundreds of years, he just explains it in under 12 minutes. The senate, the people, Rome, the caesarian section, the Julian calendar and our old friend Pompey all make appearances, but NOT the Caesar Salad, as Julius had nothing to do with it.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider the connections between the political systems of the Roman Republic and the United States. Historians debate whether or not the Republic can be considered a democracy.

What do you think?



LESSON 2.2.5 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Who were the patricians and plebeians? From which group were Roman senators chosen and why?
What were the duties of the Roman Senate?
2. Why did Rome need consuls and what were their job limitations?
3. Why did they also need a dictator and who was the model of a good dictator?
4. Why was Gaius Julius Caesar destined to go into government?
5. Who made up the first triumvirate and why did these men decide to work together?



COURSE _____

11. What evidence does John Green use to say that the Roman Republic ended long before Caesar and Augustus came to power?



LESSON 2.2.6 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #12 Fall of the Roman Empire

PURPOSE

In Crash Course World History #12, you will examine the decline of the Western Roman Empire. Once Rome stopped expanding in the 2nd century CE, loyalty to the empire began to fail as citizens of the empire were burdened with high taxes and debt. The rise of Christianity contributed as one of the factors that led to the death of the empire along with the reliance on mercenaries. Other causes that played a role in the fall of Rome were a series of rather awful emperors during the 3rd century CE when 21 men ascended to power in the course of 50 years, along with an increase in plagues brought forth by trade exchanges

along the Silk Road. The Western Roman Empire serves as a prime example of how great empires come to an inevitable end, though it did flourish for another thousand years before the Ottoman Turks conquered it in 1453 CE.

LINK

- [Crash Course World History #12 – Fall of the Roman Empire](#)

Watch the video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

PREVIEW

In which John Green teaches you about the fall of the Roman Empire, which happened considerably later than you may have been told. While the Western Roman Empire fell to barbarians in 476 CE, the Byzantines in Constantinople continued the Eastern Empire nicely, calling themselves Romans for a further 1000 years. Find out what Justinian and the rest of the Byzantine emperors were up to over there, and how the Roman Empire dragged out its famous Decline well into medieval times. In addition to all this, you'll learn about ancient sports riots and hipster barbarians, too.

PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. The first time through, just try to capture the gist of the video. The next time, try to determine important facts and information. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider what causes and forces bring an empire to fail. Are empires pushed or pulled into collapse? And in what ways is the Roman Empire still alive today?



LESSON 2.2.6 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. What is the “traditional” view of how the Roman Empire fell?
2. What decision led to the decline of the Roman legions?
3. In the 49-year span from 235 to 284 CE, how many people were or claimed to be emperor of Rome?
4. Earlier in the video, John claims the Roman Empire survived until the 15th century CE – what does he mean by this?
5. Where and when did Constantine hold the first church council for Christianity?



COURSE _____

6. During the Thought Bubble, John lists a number of similarities between Eastern and Western Roman Empire. What, perhaps, is the most consistently Roman aspect of Byzantine society?

7. What building became a symbol for the wealth and opulence of the Eastern Roman Empire?

8. How did Emperor Justinian's wife, Theodora, expand the rights of women in the empire?

9. In what major way were the Byzantines not like the rest of the Roman Empire?

10. What are the main differences between the two sides of the Christian churches?



LESSON 2.2.7 | READ | A Tale of Three Empires – Bridgette Byrd O'Connor

PURPOSE

Empire building and maintenance is a complicated process. By 300 CE, the great empires of the Afro-Eurasian ancient world were in trouble. The article defines what it means to be an empire and examines how empires fall. Students will read about the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean, Han Dynasty in China,

and Gupta Empire in India, will compare struggles each empire faced, and will determine the forces that ultimately brought the empire to fall.

ATTACHMENT

- A Tale of Three Empires

PROCESS

Read the provided article and be ready to discuss major themes and topics following your completion of the reading.



READING | A Tale of Three Empires — Bridgette Byrd O'Connor

In order to understand the fall of an empire, we must first define the concept. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the definition of a kingdom, which is usually a small geographic region ruled by a monarchy and composed of a rather homogenous group of people. These people share a common culture and can reasonably get along with each other without too many issues. You could think of a kingdom like your immediate family where your parents rule over you and your siblings. An empire is a little different in that it encompasses a larger area and while it may still be governed by one ruler, it also has a number of local officials or bureaucrats, who have the power to maintain order in the empire but also report back to the central government. Empires are also composed of people who have different cultures, customs, and languages, which makes it hard to keep everyone happy and orderly.

One of the greatest accomplishments of these large empires, which existed in various forms from the ancient world through the early 20th century, was organization. Empires had to make sure that their laws were carried out and that they could collect taxes from their citizens, and as a result, they often connected the empire by creating roads and establishing communication systems. These roads would not only connect the empire and allow for the swift transport of military personnel and supplies but they also enhanced trade. The communication posts, which usually functioned as ancient pony expresses, eventually developed into border towns that grew into large cosmopolitan cities. In order for all areas of the empire to trade efficiently and effectively, a common currency was established, which further increased trade and wealth.

Maintaining an empire was a monumental task and one that required finesse and balance. Rulers wanted to extend their empires in order to increase their tax revenues but they couldn't tax their citizens too much or they would face a revolt. Therefore, they had to carefully determine the level of taxes so that no one group was taxed too much. If rulers had to increase taxes by a considerable sum then they often decided it would be best to conquer more territory. However, conquering more land meant they needed more money, which became a vicious cycle until it was too much to maintain. Rights of citizenship were also extended to the conquered people in order to make them feel like they were truly part of the empire. Once again, this was yet another balancing act as rulers didn't want to extend too much power to the conquered peoples but also wanted to give them enough so that they wouldn't rebel. Empire building and maintenance was a complicated process! Once you factor in all of these issues, it's not surprising that even the most organized empires eventually came to an end.

By 300 CE the great empires of the Afro-Eurasian ancient world were in trouble. These empires long provided their citizens with stability in the form of large armies for protection, an increase in the trade of goods and ideas, and governments that enforced laws and justice. It wasn't all roses and chocolates though because these empires did have their issues just as any large empire would. However, it was better to live under Roman rule, the Han dynasty in China, or the Gupta Empire in India than to be a resident of one of those in-between periods that saw civil war and uncertainty. While the Han dynasty collapsed in 220 CE, the Western Roman Empire did not fall until 476 CE, and the Gupta Empire faded out by 550 CE. However, two of these empires were in trouble long before that.



HAN DYNASTY, CHINA

China has been a large and populous region for thousands of years and consequently, it has also had to deal with outsiders attempting to invade the area for just as long, which was the main reason they built that “great” wall. The Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE) entered into an agreement with these nomadic tribes that lived on its northern borders. The dynasty would pay them in return for peace and this agreement worked for many years until one of these nomadic groups got greedy. Instead of dividing the payment from the Han amongst all the nomads, one group kept it all for themselves. This, of course, angered the other nomadic tribes and they attacked both the Han and the nomadic traitor. As a result, each nomadic group negotiated individual payments and costs increased to the point that the Han could not keep up. While the government had issues with external forces, there were internal forces that also weakened the dynasty. Peasant farmers were experiencing an economic crisis and were forced to sell their property to wealthy landlords. These aristocrats were exempt from paying taxes, which meant that the peasant farmers lost their land and the government lost tax revenue. The Han dynasty appeared to be losing money at a rapid rate but then their luck really took a turn for the worse.

In 153 CE, locusts destroyed a large portion of China’s farmland while the Yellow River also began to flood uncontrollably due to years of deforestation and erosion. These natural disasters crippled the ability of the Han to provide for its people. Add a generous helping of infectious diseases, which were brought to China via the Silk Road trade routes, and we have a recipe for dynastic disaster. Had the Han dynasty been controlled by a powerful ruler, he or she might have been able to make policies to get China out of this mess. However, the Han court was a mess as

well. Competing factions were vying for power at court while military generals were attempting to increase their power as well. As a result, the dynasty fell in 220 CE when the generals decided to divide the empire amongst themselves.

WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

The Roman Empire had grown substantially from the end of Augustus’ reign in 14 CE to the death of Trajan in 117 CE and stretched from modern day Britain to Syria. As the Romans were increasing the territory of the empire, the government made sure to extend Roman citizenship to conquered lands but also allowed the conquered people to keep many of their local traditions. This was an incredibly smart way to govern as all people had the opportunity to become citizens of the Roman Empire and therefore achieve a semblance of equality under the law while also maintaining their local customs and religious beliefs. The Roman government also benefitted from the expansion of the empire since they could now collect taxes from a large population and increase the size of their army with new recruits. While this appears to be a win-win situation for all involved, the empire soon became too large to govern effectively.

Protecting the vast borders of the empire was a logistical nightmare and the Roman government soon found it easier to pay off the Germanic tribes that were known to raid the border towns of the Roman Empire. While this arrangement, which was similar to the Han dynasty’s bribery of the nomadic tribes surrounding China, appeased the Germanic tribes for a period of time, the Huns soon ended this peace. The Huns were a nomadic tribe that lived predominantly in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Most students of history remember them because of their leader Attila the Hun, who united the Huns under his leadership and set about warring with neighboring nomadic tribes such as the Goths raping, ►



pillaging, plundering, and burning as his troops moved from city to city. As Attila and his men moved farther and farther west, the Germanic tribes that lived on the edges of Roman Empire began to move into Roman territory. The Romans generally accepted the Germanic refugees until some of the generals in the area began treating the Germanic people poorly. As revenge for this mistreatment, the Germanic tribes attacked the Romans and killed approximately two-thirds of the army including Valens, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire. The once great Roman army had been horribly defeated, and this provided inspiration and courage for other Germanic tribes and the Huns to attack the borders of the Roman Empire. While the Germanic attacks on the Western Roman Empire ultimately led to the empire's defeat, there were many other factors that contributed to the western empire's demise.

The decline of the Roman Empire began long before the "official" fall of the western portion in 476 CE. Once Rome stopped expanding in the 2nd century CE, ordinary citizens of the empire were burdened with high taxes and many farmers were in debt, while aristocratic landlords became wealthier. This, of course, is a recipe for internal disaster. Loyalty to the empire began to fail, borders were harder to control, and the government began relying on mercenary soldiers to defend its interests. Mercenaries or soldiers for hire are generally loyal to money rather than to the empire or nation they are hired to protect. The emperor Diocletian, who reigned from 284 to 305 CE, attempted to institute reforms to save the empire including appointing a co-emperor, Maximian, in 286 CE and finally dividing the empire into a tetrarchy seven years later. Diocletian, however, is probably best known for his persecution of Christians, who were considered traitors under Roman law because they refused to worship the emperor and the Roman pantheon of gods. Edward Gibbon, an eighteenth-century British historian famous for writing a lengthy work

on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, includes the rise of Christianity as one of the factors that led to the death of the empire along with the reliance on mercenaries, and the rise of the Praetorian Guard, who were the bodyguards of the emperor but also responsible for the deaths of at least two emperors. Other causes played a role as well including a series of rather awful emperors during the 3rd century CE when 21 men ascended to power in the course of 50 years along with an increase in plagues brought forth by trade exchanges along the Silk Road.

The Western Roman Empire serves as a prime example of how great empires come to an inevitable end. Once the empire expands to a size that is hard to manage and cracks begin to appear in the internal structure of the government and economy then the empire cannot sustain itself. The Eastern Roman Empire with its capital at Constantinople continued for almost another thousand years before the Ottoman Turks conquered it in 1453 CE. Constantine, the emperor who succeeded Diocletian in 306 CE, built a new capital in the eastern portion of the empire and named it Constantinople (present day Istanbul). Constantinople, and its surrounding area, was much wealthier than the western empire due in large part to its location along the trade route connecting the Black Sea and Asia to the Mediterranean and Europe. The city marked the end of the major Silk Road trade route that extended from China to the Mediterranean, but more on that later. For now, we shift our attention back to India and one of its most successful dynasties, the Gupta.

THE GUPTA EMPIRE, THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF INDIA

The Gupta Empire began rather late when compared to the Han and Roman empires. Founded in 320 CE by Chandra Gupta I, who united a large section of modern day India by conquering the smaller kingdoms that had risen to power after the fall of the Mauryan and Kushan empires. These small kingdoms



had grown extremely wealthy due to their location in the middle of the Silk Road trade routes. Those empires that existed simultaneously with the Gupta in India, such as the Han and Rome, desired Indian spices and cotton. Once Chandra Gupta I consolidated his power, his empire benefitted from the wealth that trade provided as well as the protection of the natural boundaries of the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush not to mention the fact that the Gupta Empire had the added protection of a huge army complete with elephants.

Due to the relative stability of the dynasty over the course of the next century, the Gupta rulers focused more on becoming patrons of the arts and sciences rather than the conquest of new territories, which is why this period of Indian history is often referred to as the “Golden Age”. This stability was, in part, generated by the fact that the Guptas allowed some of the conquered rulers to keep their power in exchange for their loyalty to the Gupta dynasty, and of course it didn’t hurt to have that huge army to back you up either. Gupta rulers paid artists, writers, and mathematicians to create amazing works. These scholars made significant contributions to Indian society including the use of the numbers 0 through 9 and the decimal system along with numerous plays and one of the most renowned pieces of Indian literature, the Kama Sutra. Aryabhatiya, the man responsible for creating the number system we all use today, discovered some astronomical principles that would take a century for his European counterparts to discover such as the fact that Earth is spherical and rotates on its own axis. The Gupta also created an empire based primarily on Hinduism while also allowing Buddhists to worship freely. The caste system was strengthened under Gupta rule, which makes sense considering they believed primarily in Hinduism. The peace and prosperity of the empire soon began to fade as the dynasty struggled with increasing attacks by nomadic groups from Central Asia. Therefore, just as the Han and Roman

empires succumbed to these nomadic tribes so too did the Gupta. A little more than 200 years after its founding, the Gupta empire broke apart into regional kingdoms.

COMPARING EMPIRES

The main theme connecting these empires together was obviously the problem of the nomadic tribes attacking their borders. Ernest O’Roark and Eileen Wood sum up this theme quite nicely:

Competition among various groups of herding peoples for diminishing land and resources, combined with the comparative wealth of the settled empires they bordered, led nomadic confederations to first raid, then invade their neighbors. This set off a chain reaction of events that, when combined with internal weaknesses, helping bring down the Han and the Romans, while the Gupta simply fell victim to their conquests directly. (6)

Disease was another common factor in the fall of the empires as all were linked to the Silk Road trade routes. While these routes were responsible for sharing goods and ideas across thousands of miles and very different cultures, they also brought new diseases. Many of these diseases killed thousands of people but they also allowed for immunities to build up over time and therefore gave the people of Afro-Eurasia a huge advantage when they set sail across the Atlantic in search of new trade routes.

Internal struggles also played a role in the demise of these civilizations and this will be a recurring theme throughout history including some of the most famous revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If a small portion of society becomes wealthy at the expense of a larger and poorer portion of society then conflict will ultimately be the result. Those in poverty see the wealth and success



of the elite, which inspires and fuels revolutions.

Finally, the stability that these empires gave the area surrounding the Silk Road allowed for the expansion of trade, wealth, and the sharing of information. However, once these empires fell, wars increased and trade became more localized. It would take another 900-to-1000 years for new empires to gain control of the area and promote a revival of the Silk Road.

Sources:

O’Roark, Ernest and Eileen Wood. “Landscape Teaching Unit 5.1: Centuries of Upheaval in Afroeurasia, 300-600 CE.” World History for Us All. PDF file.

Big History Project. “Unit 7: Agriculture and Civilization.”

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.

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LESSON 2.2.8 | CLOSING | EQ Notebook

PURPOSE

At the start of the unit, you examined the essential question without much to go on. Now that the unit is almost over, let's revisit the essential question.

This time, cite specific passages and evidence from the content in the unit that provide insights into answering the driving question.

ATTACHMENT

- Essential Questions Unit 2 Notebook Worksheet

PROCESS

Think about this question: Why do civilizations rise and fall?

When they fall, what impact do they have on history?

Use the EQ Notebook – Unit 2 – to respond to this question as best as you can. Be prepared to talk about these ideas with your class.